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Rep. George Miller's Prepared Remarks for the Introduction of the Fair Minimum Wage Act

WASHINGTON, DC – Below are the prepared remarks of Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), senior Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, at an event to introduce the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013, with the bill's other co-author, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Chairman of the Senate Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions Committee.

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Thank you, Sen. Harkin for your decades of strong leadership on behalf of working people all across this country. The bill we are introducing is a testament to your commitment to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed.

Right now, tens of millions of Americans are working hard stocking shelves. They're working the line at a fast food restaurant and cleaning bathrooms in a downtown office building. They work full-time. Some work two or three part-time jobs. They play by the rules. They contribute.

Yet, they still live in poverty. And they are falling behind because their paychecks aren't keeping up. Today, 40 percent of Americans make less than what the minimum wage was worth in 1968. This is immoral. And it is economically dangerous. Income inequality threatens the economic security of working families and the strength of our nation.

That's why we are here today – workers and business leaders alike – to say that it's time for \$10.10.

It's time for \$10.10 because raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour will put more money in workers' pockets and more green in the tills of businesses across the country.

It's time for \$10.10 because that bigger paycheck will go right back into the economy – back into local small businesses that are always looking for new customers.

It's time for \$10.10 because we know businesses can afford to raise the minimum wage.

The New York Times, just yesterday, called this the “golden age for corporate profits,” even while workers' wages remain stuck in quicksand.

Senator Harkin and I believe that setting the minimum wage at \$10.10 an hour matters.

\$10.10 matters for Gregory and Amie, who are here with us today, and the 30 million workers like them who will get a raise under our bill – Nearly a quarter of all workers.

\$10.10 matters to the 17.5 million children who have at least one parent who will get a raise under our bill.

\$10.10 matters to women. Most low-wage workers are women. Close to 17 million women will get a pay raise under our bill. As we mark Women's History Month, we should ensure that working women and families don't fall into poverty even though they work for a living. It's time for them to get a raise.

\$10.10 also matters when it comes to indexing the minimum wage. If we are to tie the minimum wage to inflation, we must not start inflation adjustments too low. Otherwise, workers will get stuck below the poverty line in perpetuity.

This is why \$10.10 matters.

Raising the minimum wage should be a no-brainer for lawmakers of both parties. Remember that President George W. Bush signed the last minimum wage increase into law, in 2007. And, 82 House Republicans voted for the stand-alone bill when it passed the House the first time that same year.

We're not naïve. We know that raising the minimum wage is always a struggle. But that struggle starts with robust public debate.

President Obama opened up the debate at the State of the Union. And it has spread to workplaces and kitchen tables across the country. And that debate is now joined on Capitol Hill. I look forward to it.

It's time for workers to get a raise. It's time to grow our economy from the bottom up. It's time for \$10.10.

<http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/>